

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1407



Introduced by Honorable Representatives
ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party);
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT and FERDINAND R. GAITE (Bayan Muna); FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers); and SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan)

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ILLEGAL ARREST AND DETENTION OF AMANDA ECHANIS AND HER ONE-MONTH-OLD BABY IN CAGAYAN PROVINCE

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2020, the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights called on urgent action from governments to protect the health and safety of people in detention and other closed facilities, as part of overall efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. "Now, more than ever, governments should release every person detained without sufficient legal basis, including political prisoners and others detained simply for expressing critical or dissenting views," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet stressed;

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2020, at around 3:30 in the morning, Amanda Soccoro Lacaba Echanis, 32 years old and organizer of peasant women under the Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women Cagayan provincial chapter was illegally arrested and detained, along with her month-old baby boy Randall Emmanuel by the combined forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police in Baggao town, Cagayan province;

WHEREAS, Amanda Echanis' home was raided for 5 hours before the Philippine National Police came back with a search warrant and alleged witnesses;

WHEREAS, Echanis was charged with non-bailable trumped-up charges such as Illegal Possession of Firearms and Ammunitions and Illegal Possession of Explosives, same with the charges filed against human rights defenders who are currently incarcerated;

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police claimed that while she was still recuperating from giving birth and taking care of her child, she was staying in a house with high-powered firearms and even grenades, a dubious statement since Amanda couldn't possibly hide those equipment as she is breastfeeding and still recovering;

WHEREAS, planting of evidence and charging of trumped-up cases has become a trend, an old tactic and modus of the state for the political persecution of activists;

WHEREAS, it can be recalled that Amanda Echanis was also one of the many human rights advocates who were red-tagged during the Senate hearing on red-tagging. Ivy Corpin, one of NTF-ELCAC's so-

called witnesses, named Amanda Echanis as a high-ranking leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army without giving any concrete proof of her accusations;


WHEREAS, these series of attacks are part of the ongoing crackdown of the Duterte regime against activists who are vocal of the government's policies and priorities that continue to press the people in hunger and poverty. According to Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas regional chapter DANGGAYAN-Cagayan Valley, since 2018, massive and systematic red-tagging of activists was rampant in the region by the AFP using fake organizations like Mulat-CV and ISEM-CV and branding activists as "terrorists" and recruiter of NPA."

WHEREAS, at present, various organizations demand the government to not separate Amanda and her month-old baby and should not violate the Republic Act 11148 or the "Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act" that stresses the importance of the First one thousand (1,000) days of life refers to the period of a child's life, which is considered to be the critical window of opportunity to promote health and development and prevent malnutrition and its life-long consequences;

WHEREAS, amidst the intensifying political repression and disregard for basic human rights, we should recognize that activism and advocacy is part of a democracy and not an act of terrorism. Normalization of suppression through illegal means will only further curtail civil liberties and compromise the security of who are critical of this administration;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House Committee on House Committee on Human Rightst conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the illegal arrest and detention of Amanda Echanis and her one-month-old baby in Cagayan Valley.

Adopted,

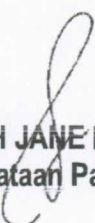

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